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## THE ISSUE.

"Do not make the mistake of imagining that the great issue before the people of Virginia is whether or not the work of a Constitutional Convention shall be submitted to the voters for ratification. It is whether or not there shall be a Constitutional Convention."—Norfolk Landmark.

So? It is interesting to learn, from our contemporary, that it is of no importance that the people of Virginia should have a voice in the adoption of their Constitution. It had not been the general impression that Virginia had progressed quite so far on the royal high road to an oligarchy that she must take her supreme law ready made from the hands of agents, without being permitted to say whether or not she likes it.

"The issue," says our contemporary, "is not whether the work of the convention shall be submitted to a vote of the people." The convention is the thing; "the people be damned." It is a new Constitution that is wanted; a convention-tinkered Constitution. It does not matter what kind of Constitution it is, or whether the people of Virginia want it. There are only two requisites; that it shall be new, and shall bear the Convention hall-mark and benediction. It may have other hall-marks, the hall-marks of men and corporations with axes to grind; but that is not worth considering. It is not an "issue." The people are not an "issue;" not even a side issue. What business is it of theirs? Their duty is to take what the "Convention" gives them, and be thankful that it is new.

And yet the men who are to fashion this Constitution will be "office-holders," and the "office-holders," our contemporary alleges, are conspiring against the welfare of Virginia. The men who have been chosen to public office in Virginia and who have been, all of them for months, some of them for years, under the eyes of their constituents, are banded together (we are told) to depose the State through the present Constitution. Yet other men, unknown men as yet, untitled men maybe, are to be trusted to frame a new Constitution; are to be trusted so implicitly that there is even no issue as to whether the people shall be permitted to review their work? Elect a man Sheriff, or Justice of the Peace, or County Clerk, and he becomes a scoundrel, we are told, who conspires against his State; elect him a member of a Convention to amend the Constitution and he becomes wise and good beyond the possibility of wrong or of error.

The "great issue" before the people of Virginia is not that they shall have a new Constitution, or an amended Constitution, but that they shall have a Constitution which will safeguard equally every interest of the State; a Constitution that will not impose unjust burdens on the people, or grant special privileges. The only way by which this can be guaranteed is by a submission of the proposed Constitution to a vote of the people. There can be no issue greater than this before the people of any self-governing Commonwealth, because it is of the very essence of self-government in its highest, and yet in its simplest, form. It is no indictment of the men who are to compose the proposed Convention to say that they should not be left to fashion a Constitution that shall be law without a ratification by the people. A Constitution is of such supreme importance that not to take so plain a precaution against mistakes as a submission of its terms to a

popular vote is to be criminally negligent.

The whole people know best what is suited to their needs. It is their right to have the last word in this matter, and there can be no infringement of it with safety. Let them be on their guard, none the less, lest this be done; for that there are those who desire it is plain.

## GUNPOWDER AS A CIVILIZER.

The trouble that England, a world power, is having in crushing the two small Boer republics of South Africa will not fail to be suggestive to those who have followed the development of the art and science of war.

It is pretty clear that if we still had the day of the battle axe and battering ram with us, the war by this would be over and Presidents Kruger and Steyn would be keeping the redoubtable Cronje company at St. Helena. The English would have smashed the Boers by mere brute force, if the issue had rested on a hand to hand contest; for one man is not a match for five in that kind of warfare where there is little difference in the courage of the one and the five.

But the Mauser has put a different face on the situation. The man behind it does not have to contend hand to hand with his five enemies. He gets on the lee side of a rock and shoots at the five, at his leisure, and experience in the Boer war has shown that where he knows how to shoot, the chances are all that he will be able to drop one or two of his enemies before they can reach him, if they charge up in front, as they are frequently compelled to do. As actual tests have shown no army, however brave, will stand that sort of slaughter. The advantage is all with the army that is acting on the defensive, and it is so enormous that a small body of courageous men, firing from a concealed position can hold a vastly larger body of men at bay, through effectiveness of modern arms. Thus 7,000 Boers, according to Hon. Webster Davis, kept General White from marching out of Ladysmith with 15,000 men to join Gen. Buller, and Buller from marching in with 25,000 to join White.

The tendency of the ever increasing efficiency of modern weapons of warfare is to minimize the advantage of mere preponderance of numbers. There does not appear to have been such a material increase in the mere destructiveness of war as was expected and predicted from the use of long range arms and high explosives. But this is due to the mere fact that the combatants avoid exposure and fight at greater intervals. It is possible to charge and take trenches still, but it does not pay, and strategy has to be employed instead. The nature of warfare has changed, and the change is to the advantage of right, rather than might.

The end of war, if we may judge from the struggle in South Africa, is likely to come, not so much through man's increasing abhorrence of human slaughter, (though that will play a part) as through the great disadvantage at which modern arms place the attacking nation. War is becoming too costly, and the issue too uncertain. Large nations can no longer afford to attack small nations, if the latter are prepared for resistance. The chances are all that England will have lost more men before Roberts reaches Pretoria than there are Boers in the ranks.

An enlightened public sentiment holds war in increasing detestation; that will help to make war impossible. But the modern gun is the strongest anti-war argument. Man's inventive genius has outrun his humanitarian sentiments in development. Mechanical, not ethical, progress is the great pacific factor of present day civilization, though both contribute to the same end. If peace had to wait on the elimination of man's desire to fight, of his love of martial glory, of his selfish desire to take advantage of his neighbor, it would wait long. But the modern weapon, in an enemy's hand, appeals powerfully to that same selfishness, and throws its weight in the scale for peace.

When some wizard of inventive genius has given us a contrivance with which one man, concealed on a kopje, can annihilate companies, regiments, brigades, and whole armies, we shall see the finish of war. Gunpowder, electricity, or some other destructive matter will then be the really of Gospel—the Gospel of peace, if not of good will.

## WAR OR INSURRECTION?

Any one seeking proof that the President wilfully misrepresented and misinterpreted existing conditions when he publicly disavowed imperialism, may find it in the struggle in the Philippines.

The administration is pleased to speak of the "domestic insurrection" in the Philippines, and to hold that the United States is at peace with all the world. The Filipinos are described as "rebels," "insurgents," not enemies. We are endeavoring to maintain and restore peace and order in one of our insular possessions, they allege.

Let us pass over the distinctly imperialistic principle involved in this contention, apparently unnoticed by the President's defenders, and the asinine inconsistency which calls Filipino sympathizers "traitors," when the Constitution expressly declares that treason shall consist only in levying war against the United States or in adhering to their "enemies," and examine the real character of this so-called insurrection.

The fight began when we had not yet acquired any title to the Philippines and claimed no jurisdiction save in Manila city and bay. It began two days before the Paris treaty (under which we claim title), was ratified by our Senate, and several weeks before

the Spanish Cortes acted upon it. The Filipinos had at that time an established government under a claim of independence, which controlled the greater portion of the islands. According to Otis, we began the firing. From that time until now we have been the aggressors. The Filipinos have never recognized our sovereignty nor given their consent to be governed by us, and there is no truth whatever in the pretence that they owe our government allegiance.

Now, when the fight began the Filipinos were either Spanish subjects or an independent nation. Therefore no one can make the silly claim that prior to the dual ratification of the treaty, this fight was an insurrection. It was a war, not in self-defence, but aggressively waged, against a foreign nation, or the subjects of a foreign nation, with which we were at peace under a peace protocol. When the treaty became effective what was the situation? We continued the war—a war of conquest—against either an independent people, or a subject people whom we had bought, against their will, for two dollars a head. Never having acknowledged their subjection to us, or done any act of allegiance, it is impossible to conceive by what mystical process they became transformed into "rebellious subjects." And clearly, even on this, the administration theory, we are an empire, having subject peoples.

But the point we more particularly desire to note is in reference to the imperialistic conduct of the President. Only Congress can declare war. Congress has never declared war against the Filipinos; nor recognized a state of war. Yet William McKinley precipitated and pressed a war of conquest prior to the ratification of the treaty, and has continued it since that ratification. He buys a nation, proceeds to conquer it, then coerces the Senate into confirming the purchase; then continues his war of conquest, institutes a government with himself as autocrat, and in open defiance of the Constitution, from which he derives all his powers; and then gives us a few catch phrases to gag our mouths, opened in amazement. Could the Czar of the Russians do more?

Yet we are told by this man: "There can be no imperialism."

The decision of Judge Brown, of New York, the effect of which has been to shield the alleged accomplices of Capt. Oberlin M. Carter in the theft of some millions from the government, adds another unsavory chapter to the unsavory history of that crime. The postmaster who steals a one dollar bill from a registered letter, or the silly burglar who takes to the manufacture of five cent pieces, is hust! a off to prison without ceremony. But the man who stole millions was convicted with the greatest difficulty, failed of Executive clemency only because of public indignation, AND IS NOW OUT ON BAIL PENDING THE HEARING OF SOME TECHNICALITY, WHILE HIS ACCOMPLICES CAN NOT EVEN BE ARRESTED, BECAUSE THEY ARE SHIELDED BY A FEDERAL JUDGE.

"Tricky," "dishonest," "dishonorable," "disgraceful midnight tactics," "unscrupulous partisans" are a few live coals which we have extracted with the aid of a pair of tongs from the red-hot resolutions of the convention of H. Clay Evans' faction of the Republican party in Chattanooga; and it was not the Democrats who were roasted.

Admiral Dewey says he is banking on the desire of hundreds of thousands of his fellow countrymen to break away from the old parties. In view of the fact that there are already about 17 new parties that are depending upon this same alleged and illusory longing, the Admiral is likely to have some competition even in that field.

The terrible destruction of life and property by the breaking of the dam in the Colorado river at Austin, Texas, is a rather severe indictment of American Engineering. The dam was considered one of the finest of its kind in the country, yet it was swept away like pasteboard by the flood.

It is a little difficult for a plain, ordinary, honest-minded citizen to understand how "our pain duty" demanded by "justice and good faith" has in three months become a "brutal proposition?"

Couldn't Salisbury persuade Hay to score another diplomatic triumph by duplicating in the Persian Gulf his Chinese "open door" racket? It always delights the American people to score a point against the Czar for John Bull.

The dog-muzzling business in the District of Columbia is finding few champions in the United States Senate. That distinguished body never fails to shy at anything resembling a muzzle.

A British officer in South Africa describes Buller's strategy as "blundering back and forth along the Tugela." This is a mean attempt to deprive a famous ferryman of his laurels.

The Alabama Populists have grabbed up the dispensary issue, and are preparing to add a dash of Tom Johnson's definition to an already complicated situation.

The inhabitants of the Danish West Indies are objecting to being bought and sold. It looks like we were about to invest \$1,000,000 in another small bunch of rebels.

The Hon. Ignatius Donnelly says the middle-of-the-road Pops may nominate Dewey. It is up to the woman's suffragists.

If Porto Rican free trade would benefit only the trusts, as the Republicans contend, why is the tariff bill limited to only two years?

Wasn't that eminently typical Democrat, the Hon. William D. Bynum, even invited to that Brooklyn anti-Bryan banquet?

Is the Hon. Webster Davis preparing the way for Mac to give the lion's tail a real good twist along about the end of October?

Turkey having slipped out of his paws with the loss of a few feathers, the Bear will postpone his feast a trifle longer.

The Dublin corporation made it very plain that it takes more than a royal visit to bridge over the chasm between Irish affection and British oppression.

The battle of the sexes in Beattie, Kan., resulted in the shedding of little blood, but many tears.

Chairman Jones will miss a lot of fun if he doesn't accept that invitation to the Brooklyn anti-Bryan dinner.

These French dolls are talking about duels as seriously as though they were real men.

It smells of gas again down in Delaware.

## NOTES AND OPINIONS.

### THANKS FOR THIS MUCH!

(Washington Post.)

General Otis has not been recalled too soon. We understand, of course, that, in the polite phraseology of official life, he is reluctantly permitted to return to the United States. But the fact of importance is that he is about to leave Manila, and we hasten to put on record our grateful acceptance of the new arrangement. If we have, at this happy moment, a word to say, it must be to the effect that General Otis might well have been "permitted" to come home twelve months ago.

Of course, we have read with pride—at least we wanted to—the Otis bulletins of the past year or more. Naturally, if we had believed them—which we did not—we should have felt that the glory of the flag and the honor of the country were in able hands. The truth is, however, that we have seen, even through the devices of the Manila censor, the hollow and barrenness of the Otis statement of the situation.

Despite the various proclamations of decisive victory—as frequent and as stupid as Samson's reported announcements of the reduction of the Spanish defenses at Santiago in 1898—despite all this, it has been flagrantly obvious, since the day Otis took command in Luzon, that the Filipinos were neither frightened nor suppressed, and that the war, as Otis was conducting it, would run along "forever and a day."

Now, heaven be thanked, he is returning to the country of his birth. Any change in the Philippines must be for the better. We are too thankful to offer a suggestion.

### SUPERIMPOSED TURRETS.

(Newport News Press.)

The esteemed Washington Post is not yet satisfied with the tests to which the superimposed turrets of the battleship Kearsarge have been put, and suggests that it would be a good idea to go slow before requiring that the new battleships recently authorized by Congress are equipped with this style of turret. While it would be foolish for the government to invest millions of dollars in an untried theory, we believe that much of the prejudice against the turret arrangement of the Kearsarge is due to personal reasons, rather than to any real defects in the system. Practical tests have shown that none of the pessimistic predictions regarding Lieutenant Strauss' invention are at all likely to be realized, while every claim set forth by the advocates of the superimposed turrets seem to have been well grounded.

One of the main objections of the Post is based on the ground that none of the captains with practical experience in the recent war have been consulted in reference to the construction of these turrets. Probably this explains most of the prejudice against them.

### CONFEDERATE FLAG DESIGNS.

(Richmond Dispatch.)

In a recent issue of the New York Mail and Express there appeared five designs for the permanent flags of the Confederate States. These were drawn by M. Fannie Whitfield, of Enfield, N. C., a Virginian by birth, and were by her addressed to Hon. Alex. H. Stephens. Her letter to him and the accompanying drawings were found by some of the Federal troops when their army entered Richmond. They are now in the possession of Mrs. Richard T. Greene, who has an office in the Times building in New York. Mr. Stephens being dead, we think the papers ought to be returned to Miss Whitfield, if she is living.

### OBSTINATE FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

(Baltimore Herald.)

The immigration figures show that the down-trodden people of Europe still regard the glorious United States as the land of the free and the home of the brave.

### THE SURPLUS AND THE WAR TAX

(New York Journal of Commerce.)

The surplus revenue this fiscal year will be \$75,000,000. There is no country on earth except the United States where such a result would not be the most disastrous indictment that could be drawn against an administration; a moderate deficit that could be bridged by a temporary loan would not subject the administration to one-tenth part of the criticism. And this European view is substantially correct. No more money ought to be taken from the taxpayers than is actually necessary to carry on the government, and an administration that takes \$75,000,000 too much is a great deal worse than one that takes five or ten millions too little; the deficiency can be supplied immediately by a loan and ultimately by increased revenue. But a surplus cannot be returned to the taxpayers; the nearest approach to it would be the purchase of bonds, but we are now in process of replacing all the bonds that mature soon with bonds that will not mature for thirty years. The reason that a surplus is looked at differently here from what it is in Europe is that for many years our national taxes have come from imports, spirits, beer and tobacco. For various reasons, the greater part of the people desire to

have high taxes on these; they approve of the taxes for their own sake; the tax is not simply a means of supplying revenue, but it is a means of making foreign goods, beer, spirits and tobacco expensive. The present situation is very different. We are taxing medicines and all sorts of proprietary articles, almost every sort of business document, and many occupations. No one pretends that these taxes are in the interest of anybody; they promote neither home industry nor the drinking of ice water. The business community, the population generally, desire to get rid of them at the earliest possible moment.

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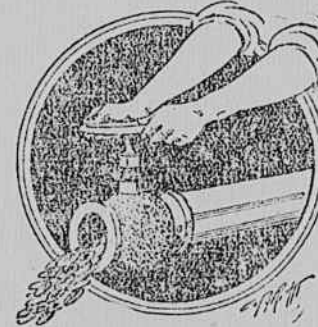
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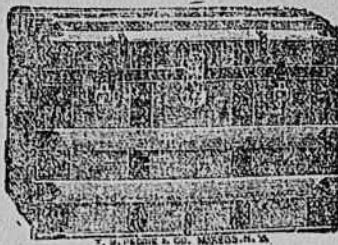
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